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ABSTRACT

This book aims to make a genuinely new contribution to the teaching of classic and contemporary literature in high schools--a system of teaching English that achieves classroom control through engagement and interest in content. The questions posed in the book help students build a kind of mental muscle for reading challenging texts and, what is more, interacting with them. Proposed in the book is a "model of human action," with a series of questions that focus on character motivation and that foster reasoning, reflecting, and further questioning. The book offers a heuristic that leads students through factual, interpretive, and evaluative questions and answers--eventually, students internalize the heuristic and begin to ask the questions themselves, making them more independent readers and preparing them for lifelong engagement with challenging books. Along the way, the book intersperses "Provocations," exercises that help students to: imagine a character more fully; grasp a writer's style non-analytically and creatively; connect more deeply with relationships in a story; and prepare themselves to read, act, and recite well in class. According to the book, students participate in authentic conversations about issues that matter, finding in-text evidence for their views that simultaneously shed light on their own experiences. The book uses "Eveline" (James Joyce), "Everyday Use" (Alice Walker), "The Great Gatsby" (F. Scott Fitzgerald), and "Oedipus the King" (Sophocles) for its literature examples. Appended are "The Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11-32) and James Joyce's short story "Eveline." Contains a bibliographic essay. (NKA)

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